BURLINGTON, NC ZONING ORDINANCE

SECTION 32.11A: LANDSCAPING

(Amendment creating new language effective November 1, 2004)

1. Purpose and Scope

- a. This section establishes minimum standards for the design of landscapes for uses other than single-family and two-family residential dwellings in order to improve Burlington and its planning area aesthetically, economically and environmentally. This section should improve the appearance of the community through the provision of and the preservation of trees in order to better control soil erosion; reduce the hazards of flooding; stabilize the groundwater tables; absorb carbon dioxide; supply oxygen; provide shade for cooling; screen noise, dust, glare; and preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment.
- b. The planting yard regulations are intended to minimize potential conflicts between abutting developments. The purpose of planting yards is to ensure that a natural area of appropriate size and density of plantings is located between zoning districts and/or trees.

2. Definitions

Caliper. A standard trunk diameter measurement for nursery-grown trees taken six inches above the ground for up to and including four-inch caliper size and 12 inches above the ground for larger sizes.

Critical Root Zone (CRZ). A circular region measured outward from a tree trunk representing the essential area of the roots that must be maintained in order for the tree's survival. The critical root zone is one foot of radial distance for every inch of tree DBH, with a minimum of eight feet.

DBH. Diameter at breast height is the tree trunk diameter measured in inches at a height of 4.5 feet above the ground.

Deciduous. Those plants that annually lose their leaves.

Drip line. A vertical line extending from the outermost edge of the tree canopy or shrub branch to the ground.

Evergreen. Those plants that retain foliage throughout the year.

Evergreen screen. A plant growing to over 20 feet in height at maturity that retains foliage year round and is planted to provide a dense vegetative screen for purposes of visual mitigation between zoning districts or differing property uses.

3. Applicability

- a. Exemptions: These requirements shall <u>not</u> apply to:
 - (1) Single-family detached dwellings or two-family dwellings on their own lots;
 - (2) Multifamily developments containing eight or fewer dwelling units on a single zoning (building) lot;
 - (3) Properties within or surrounded by the Central Business (B-3) zoning district;
 - (4) Property lines abutting railroad rights-of-way and utility easements in excess of 60 feet in width; and,
 - (5) Property lines abutting dedicated street right-of-way that has remained unopened for a period of at least 15 years.
- b. Application: These requirements shall apply to the following:
 - (1) New Principal Building or Use: Principal buildings or open uses of land constructed or established after the adoption of this ordinance.
 - (2) Changes in Use: Changes in use that result in an increase of two or more in the Land Use Classification number. The requirements of this section shall be applicable to the entire zone lot.
 - (3) Expansions or Reconstruction: Expansions that will result in a parking or building square footage increases of more than 3,000 square feet for developments existing on the effective date of this ordinance. In such cases, the landscaping requirements shall apply only to the expansion.

- (4) Publicly-Owned Buildings: Publicly-owned buildings, municipal or other utility structures and installations, parks and open air uses, but not including utility rights-of-way or easements.
- c. Reduction in Parking Requirements for Pre-Existing Developments: To allow compliance with the landscaping regulations, the number of required off-street parking spaces may be reduced by up to 10 percent.

4. Planting Yards

- a. Required Planting Areas: The following areas are required to be landscaped:
 - (1) Street planting yards;
 - (2) Parking lots (excluding vehicle loading, storage and display areas); and,
 - (3) Side and rear yards (referred to as Type A, B, C and D planting yards).

b. Planting Area Descriptions:

- (1) Street Planting Yard: A planting area parallel to a public street designed to provide continuity of vegetation along the right-of-way and a pleasing view from the road. No more than 15% percent of the street planting yard may be used for walkways or signs. Parking, merchandise display and off-street loading are prohibited in the street planting yard.
- (2) Parking Lot Plantings: Planting areas within and adjacent to parking areas designed to shade and improve the attractiveness of large areas of pavement.
- (3) Type A Planting Yard: A high-density screen intended to block substantially visual contact between adjacent uses and create spatial separation. A Type A Planting Yard reduces lighting and noise that would otherwise intrude upon adjacent uses.
- (4) Type B Planting Yard: A medium-density screen intended to partially block visual contact between uses and create spatial separation.

- (5) Type C Planting Yard: A low-density screen intended to partially block visual contact between uses and create spatial separation.
- (6) Type D Planting Yard: A peripheral planting strip intended to separate uses, provide vegetation in densely developed areas and enhance the appearance of individual properties.

5. Planting Yard Determination

To determine the planting yards required by this ordinance, take the following steps:

- a. Identify the classification of the proposed or expanded land use and of any existing or proposed adjacent land use(s) by using the Land Use Classification Table found at the end of this section. A land use is an existing use on an adjacent property when a building permit is issued. If a zone lot contains uses with different land use classification, select the higher numbered classification; then,
- b. Use the Planting Yard Chart to determine the appropriate letter designation for each planting yard; then,
- c. Match the letter designation obtained from the Planting Yard Chart with the Planting Rate Chart to determine the types and numbers of shrubs and trees required:

	PLANTING YARD CHART					
E-X-I-S-T-I-N-G	A-D-J-A-C-E-N-T U-S-E(S)				U-S-E(S)	
Land Use Classification	1	2	3	4	5	Undeveloped
1	*	*	*	*	*	*
2	С	D	D	D	D	D
3	В	В	D	D	D	D
4	Α	A	С	D	D	D
5	A	A	В	С	D	D
*No Planting Yard Required						

Planting Yard Rates					
Yard Type	Minimum Width (ft.)	Min. Avg. Width (ft.)	Canopy Tree Rate	Understory Tree Rate	Shrub Rate
Street Yard	5	5	2/100 lf ^b	NCc	15/100 lf
Type A Yard	20ª	40ª	3/100 lf/oc	8/100 lf/oc	25/100 lf/oc
Type B Yard	15ª	30a	2/100 lf	4/100 lf	20/100 lf
Type C Yard	10ª	20ª	1/100 lf ^b	2/100 lf	15/100 lf
Type D Yard	5	5	-	2/100 lf	10/100 lf
Parking Lot	NA	NA	1/12 parking spaces ^b	NC°	NA

lf: linear feet

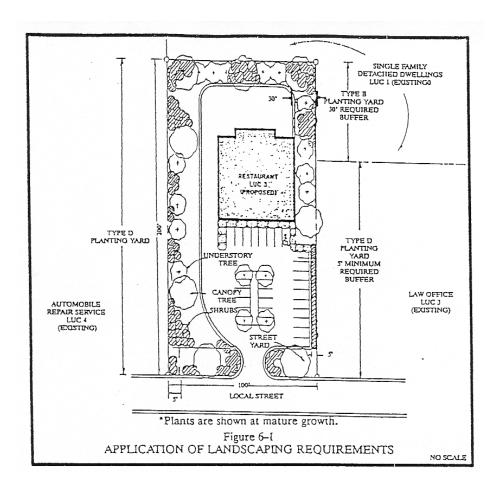
oc: on center

NOTE: On lots of record less than one and half acres (65,340 square feet in area), no development shall be required to place required landscaping on greater than 15 percent of the site.

^a Walls, a minimum of five feet in height, constructed of masonry, stone or pressure treated lumber or an opaque fence, a minimum of five feet in height, may be used to reduce the widths of the planting yards by ten feet.

^b In street yards, Type C and Type D planting yards and parking lots, understory trees may be substituted for canopy trees at the rate of two understory trees for each required canopy tree.

^c One understory tree may be substituted for each required canopy tree if the Technical Review Committee determines that there would be a major conflict with overhead utility lines.



6. Landscaping Design and Maintenance Standards

- a. Calculation of Street Planting Yards: Street planting yard rate and width calculations shall exclude access drives.
- b. Plant Species: Species used in required street planting yards, parking lots and planting yards shall be of a locally adapted nature.
- c. Dimension of Planting Areas: Each planting area containing trees, including those located in parking lots, shall have a minimum inside dimension of five feet and be at least 200 square feet in area.
- d. Grouping: For the Type B, C and D planting yards, shrubs and trees may be grouped or clustered; however, not more than 50 percent of each required plant material may be grouped or clustered. The remainder of the materials shall be distributed throughout the planting yard. There shall be at least one row of evergreen shrubs or evergreen understory trees in all Type A planting yards.

- e. Parking Lot Spacing: Required canopy tree areas shall be distributed throughout parking lots and shall be located within or adjacent to parking lots as tree islands, at the end of parking bays, inside medians or between rows of parking spaces. Trees located within planting yards cannot be credited toward the parking lot landscaping requirements.
- f. Canopy Tree Size: Canopy trees must be a minimum of eight feet high and two inches in caliper and measured six inches above grade when planted. When mature, a canopy tree should be at least 40 feet high and have a crown width of 30 feet or greater.
- g. Understory Tree Size: Understory trees must be a minimum of four feet high and one inch in caliper and measured six inches above grade when planted. When mature, an understory tree should be between 15 and 40 feet high.
- h. Shrub Size: All shrubs shall be expected to reach a minimum height of 36 inches and a minimum spread of 30 inches within three years of planting. The minimum planting size shall be 18 inches in height or spread.
- i. Berm Size: Any berm shall have a minimum height of three feet, a minimum crown width of three feet and a side slope no greater than 3:1.
- j. Wall Planters: Wall planters shall be constructed of masonry, stone or pressure-treated lumber stamped for ground contact (AWPB LP-22 1980 or equivalent). The minimum height of the wall planter shall be 30 inches. The minimum height of shrubs in the wall planter shall be six inches. The effective planting area of the wall planter shall be four feet in width. If the wall planter is to contain trees, the effective planting width shall be seven inches.
- k. Encroachments Permitted in Required Planting Yards: The following are permitted in required planting yards provided there is no interference with any sight area:
 - (1) Landscaping features, including but not limited to ornamental pools, planting boxes, sculpture, arbors, trellises and birdbaths.
 - (2) Pet shelters, at-grade patios, play equipment, outdoor furniture, ornamental entry columns and gates, flag poles, lamp posts, address posts, HVAC equipment, mailboxes, outdoor fire places, public utility wires and poles, pumps, wells, fences, retaining walls or similar structures.

- (3) Cornices, steps, canopies overhanging eaves and gutters, window sills, bay windows or similar architectural features, chimneys and fire places, fire escapes, fire balconies and fire towers may project not more than two and one-half feet into any required planting yard, but in no case shall be closer than three feet to any property line.
- 1. Setback Less Than Planting Yard: If the required building setback is less than the required planting yard width, the building setback shall control, reducing the required planting yard width only along side the building. The planting rate of the required planting yard shall still apply.
- m. Location of Planting Material Outside Shade of Building: Where a building is located less than ten feet from a property line and the planting yard would be heavily shaded by buildings on both sides of the property line, the required trees and shrubs may be planted outside the shaded area to improve survivability.
- n. Obstructions: Landscaping shall not obstruct the view of motorists using any street, driveway or parking aisle.
- o. Location: Required trees and shrubs shall not be installed in street rights-of-way. Required trees and shrubs may be placed:
 - (1) in water quality conservation easements;
 - (2) in electric utility easements below overhead lines; and,
 - (3) in drainage maintenance and utility easements.
- p. Plant Protection: Whenever planting areas are adjacent to parking lots or drives, the planting areas shall be protected from damage by vehicles, lubricants or fuels.
- q. Maintenance: The owner is responsible for maintaining all required plant materials and planting areas in good health and appearance. Any dead, unhealthy or missing plants must be replaced within 180 days with vegetation that conforms to the initial planting rates and standards. When plant material is severely damaged due to unusual weather conditions or other acts of God, the owner shall have two years to replant.

7. Procedures

a. Landscaping Plan Required: Before obtaining a grading permit or a building permit, an applicant must receive approval of a landscaping plan from the Technical Review Committee. The landscaping plan must have been prepared in accordance with the City's requirements.

b. Installation of Plant Materials

- (1) Installation of plant material shall occur before issuance of a Certificate of Compliance.
- (2)If at the time of a request for a Certificate of Compliance the required planting areas are not complete and it can be determined that: (a) plant materials are unavailable; (b) completion of the planting areas would jeopardize the health of the plant materials; or, (c) weather conditions prohibit completion of the planting areas, then the Enforcement Officer may defer the installation of plant materials. The developer shall submit a copy of a signed contract for installation of the required planting areas, and the developer may be required to post a surety equal to the amount of the contract. In no instance shall the surety be for a period greater than The Enforcement Officer may issue a temporary 180 days. Certificate of Compliance but shall not issue a Certificate of Compliance until the planting areas have been completed and approved.

8. Alternate Methods of Complying

a. General Provisions:

- (1) Alternate landscaping plans, plant materials or planting methods may be used where impractical situations would result from application or landscaping requirements. Such situations may result from utility easements, streams, natural rock formations, topography, lot configuration or where other physical conditions exist or where other site conditions exist such as unified development design or other unusual site conditions.
- (2) The Enforcement Officer may approve an alternate plan that proposes different plant materials, planting yard widths or methods provided that quality, effectiveness, durability and performance are equivalent to that required by this ordinance.

- (3) The performance of alternate landscaping plans must be reviewed by the Enforcement Officer to determine if the alternate plan meets the intent and purpose of this ordinance. This determination shall take into account the land use classification of adjacent property, number of plantings, species, arrangement and coverage, location of plantings on the lot and the level of screening, height, spread and canopy of the plantings at maturity.
- (4) Decisions of the Enforcement Officer regarding alternate methods of compliance may be appealed to the Board of Adjustment.
- b. Lot of Record Provisions: For zone lots less than 100 feet in width, the following provisions may be applied:
 - (1) For zone lots less than 100 feet and greater than 80 in width where Type D Planting Yards are required, one Type D Planting Yard may be eliminated from the landscaping plan if the Enforcement Officer finds that strict application of the requirements of this section prevents reasonable use of the property. However, the plantings required for this yard shall be installed in remaining planting yards.
 - (2) For zone lots less than 80 feet in width where Type D Planting Yards are required, two Type D Planting Yards may be eliminated from the landscaping plan if the Enforcement Officer finds that strict application of the requirements of this section prevents reasonable use of the property. All required plants for these yards shall be installed in remaining planting yards.

9. Provisions for Preserving Existing Trees

- a. General: Any existing tree or group of trees that stands within or near a required planting area and meets or exceeds the standards of this ordinance may be used to satisfy the tree requirements of the planting area. Protection of tree stands, rather than individual trees, is strongly encouraged.
- b. Protection of Existing Trees: To receive credit, trees must be protected from direct and indirect root damage and trunk and crown disturbance. The following standards shall apply:
 - (1) The protected area around trees shall include all land within the canopy drip line.
 - (2) Construction site activities such as parking, material storage, soil stock piling and concrete washout shall not be permitted within tree protection areas.

- (3) Protective fencing shall be installed around tree protection areas prior to any land disturbance. Such fences shall be at least four feet high and may consist of snow fence or polyethylene safety fencing. Fencing shall remain in place until construction is complete and other landscaping has been installed.
- c. Dead or Unhealthy Trees: No credit will be allowed for any dead tree, any tree in poor health or any tree subjected to grade alterations. The death of any tree used for preservation credit shall require the owner to plant new trees equal to the number of credited trees.
- d. Rate of Credit: Credits shall be allowed at the rate of one canopy tree for every three inches of circumference measured at four and one-half feet above grade. Credits shall be subtracted from the total number of canopy and understory trees required in the same planting yards where the tree is located. In every case, however, there shall be at least one canopy tree for every 50 linear feet of street planting yard, existing or planted.

LAND USE CLASSIFIC	ATION TABLE
PERMITTED USES	LAND USE CLASSIFICATION (LUC)
ACCESSORY buildings including but not limited to fallout shelters, garages, tool sheds, swimming pools	1
ADULT bookstores, adult video stores	4
ADULT cabarets	4
ADULT motels	4
AGENCIES including but not limited to travel, brokers, insurance, loan, real estate, employment	2
AGRICULTURAL implements, heavy machinery sales, repairs, rentals or storage	3
AGRICULTURAL uses and sales, nurseries, truck farms, greenhouses, etc.	3
AIRPORTS, aircraft landing strips	5
ALLIED health offices including but not limited to physical and occupational therapists, vocational rehabilitation, opticians, dental and medical health personnel, pastoral	2

ANY use that is not otherwise prohibited by law or by Section 32.10:M	
	3
APOTHECARY shops	3
AMUSEMENTS, commercial, including but not limited to bowling alleys, roller skating rinks and the following temporary uses: roller coaster, carousels, fairgrounds, automobile race tracks, circuses or the like. Not including drive-in theaters or commercial stables.	_
	4
ASSEMBLING of electrical appliances, electronic instruments and devices, radios and phonographs, including electroplating; and the manufacturing of small parts only such as coils, capacitors, transformers, crystal holders and the like	
	4
ATHLETIC fields, recreational buildings, playgrounds, no commercial gain, no automobile or motorcycle racing	
	1
AUDITORIUMS, in-door theaters, assembly halls	4
AUTOMOBILE accessories, sales	3
AUTOMOBILE assembling, painting, upholstering, rebuilding, reconditioning, body and fender works, truck repairing or overhauling and similar uses	
	4
AUTOMOBILE tire retreading or recapping	3
AUTOMOBILE body and fender repairing when conducted within a completely enclosed building	
	3
AUTOMOBILE sales, new and used	3
AUTOMOBILE laundry	4
AUTOMOBILE laundry, self-service	4
AUTOMOBILE, motorcycle race tracks, demolition derbies	5
AUTOMOBILE parking lots serving uses permitted in district in which lot is located	3
AUTOMOBILE parking lots serving non- residential uses in another district	4

CONVALESCENT homes	3
material, sales and storage	3
CONTINUING Care Retirement Communities (CCRC) CONTRACTORS' yards, including building	3
COMMUNITY buildings, not for commercial gain	2
COLLEGES, universities, academic, including fraternity, sorority houses, dormitories and incidental uses when on the same unit of property	3
COAL, coke, wood lots	5
CLUBS and lodges, private, no commercial gain	3
CLEANERS, self-service	3
CLEANERS and dryers	3
CHURCHES, synagogues, temples and other places of worship, rectories, Sunday schools	2
CHILD care facilities	2
CARPET, rug, bag cleaning establishments CEMETERIES or mausoleums	3 2
BROADCASTING studios, radio, television	2
BOARDING and rooming houses	2
BLACKSMITH and horseshoeing shops	3
BANKS, savings and loan and similar financial institutions	2
produced on premises BAKERIES, bottling works	3 4
BAKERIES, selling at retail, products	3
AUTOMOBILE service stations, not including outside storage or used, wrecked, inoperable or dismantled automobiles	
AUTOMOBILE repair shops, but not including body or fender repairing except when conducted within a completely enclosed building	4
AUTOMOBILE parking lots, commercial; may be for monetary gain	3

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DWELLINGS, detached, one family, one owner, one lot	1
DWELLINGS, detached, one-family condominiums/townhouses	1
DWELLINGS, duplex, two-family, one owner, one lot	1
DWELLINGS, duplex, two-family; condominiums/townhouses	1
DWELLINGS, attached or detached multifamily; one owner, one lot	2
DWELLINGS, attached, multifamily; condominiums/townhouses	2
DWELLINGS within mixed use structures	2
DWELLINGS for caretaker on premises where employed	2
ELECTRICAL SHOPS	3
EXHIBITION buildings, galleries or show rooms; private	2
FACILITIES within a physician's or dentist's office building or within a convalescent home or hospital, not to exceed 50% of such office or building, for the dispensing and sale on and within the premises, of prescription medicines and medical appliances customarily prescribed or recommended by licensed physicians and dentists and dispensed by licensed pharmacists under the law of the State of	
North Carolina	2
FAIRGROUNDS, carousels, roller coasters, ferris wheels, super slides and the like	4
FAMILY care homes	2
FENCES and walls	N/A
FLAMMABLE liquids or gases, bulk storage in quantities less than 100,000 gallons	4
FLOWER, plant sales, not enclosed	3
FOUNDRY casting, lightweight, nonferrous metal, not causing noxious fumes, noise or	_
odors	3
FUNERAL homes	2
GARBAGE dumps, incinerators	5
GIFT shops, hardware stores, pharmacies, pet shops and supplies and pet grooming services	3
GOLF courses, except par-three or miniature courses	1
	-
GOLF courses, par-three or miniature golf	3

GOLF driving ranges	3
GOLF repair shops	3
GUEST houses	1
HELIPORTS, defined as an area of land, water or structural surface used for helicopter take-off and landing plus accessory buildings	4
HELISTOPS, defined as an area of land, water or structural surface for discharge of passengers or cargo from helicopters, but no field service or maintenance	4
HELISTOPS, emergency medical	4
HOME occupations	1
HOME professional offices	1
HOSPITALS, sanatoria, homes for the ill or aged, nursing homes	4
HOTELS, motels	4
ITINERANT merchants	N/A
JUNK yards	5
LABORATORIES, experimental photo or motion picture, film or testing	3
LABORATORIES, medical, research	3
LAUNDRIES	3
LAUNDRIES, industrial	4
LAUNDRIES, self-service	3
MACHINE shops, excluding such presses over 20-ton rated capacity, drop hammers and automatic screw machines	3
MANUFACTURED Housing Overlay Districts	N/A
MANUFACTURING, compounding, assembling or treatment of articles or merchandise from the following previously prepared materials: bone, feathers, felt, fiber, fur, glass, hair, horn, leather, paper, plastics, precious or semi-precious metals or stones, shells, textiles, tobacco, wood (excluding planning mills), yarn and paint not employing a boiling process	4
MANUFACTURING, compounding, processing packaging or treatment of such products as bakery goods, candy, cosmetics, dairy products, drugs, perfumes, pharmaceuticals, perfumed toilet soap, toiletries and food products except certain products listed in Section 32.10:M	4

MANUFACTURING and maintenance of electric and neon signs, billboards and commercial advertising structures and light	
sheet metal products including heating and	
ventilating ducts and equipment, cornices, eaves and the like	4
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MANUFACTURING of musical instruments, toys, novelties and rubber and metal stamps	
MANUEACTURING of matters and figurings	4
MANUFACTURING of pottery and figurines or similar ceramic products using only	
previously pulverized clay and kilns fired only by electricity	_
omy by electricity	4
MEDICAL offices including but not limited to physicians, surgeons, dentists, nurses, paramedical, osteopaths, chiropractors,	
psychologists, optometrists, podiatrists	2
METAL shops involving fabrication of sheet metal only	4
MOBILE homes/manufactured houses, individually owned lots	1
MOBILE home parks	2
MONUMENT works, stone works	4
MOTEL, hotel	4
MOTOR vehicles, towing and storage services	4
NIGHT clubs	3
OFFICES, including but not limited to accountants, attorneys, architects, engineers	3
080.12	3
OPEN air sales, not incidental to the operation of an otherwise permitted use,	
including farmers' markets, flea markets,	
antique sales, craft fairs, used or new merchandise promotions and similar uses	3
PHILANTHROPIC, eleemosynary institutions	2
PHOTOGRAPHIC developing, processing, finishing	3
PHYSICIANS', surgeons' and dentists' offices for treatment of human beings	2
PLANNED Unit Developments, dwellings, etc.	2
PLUMBING shops	3

PUBLIC parks, recreational facilities PUBLIC buildings, libraries, museums, art galleries and the like 2 PUBLIC utility facilities including transformer stations, high voltage transmission lines and transmission line structures and transmitting or relay stations QUARRIES or other extractive industries ECYCLING facilities for the purpose of collecting, processing and distributing recyclable goods including but not limited to paper, cardboard, plastics, glass, aluminum, tin, motor oil and batteries 4 RESTAURANTS including all eating places except drive-ins, night clubs, clubs and lodges RETAIL businesses not otherwise listed herein 3 RETAIL sales SCHOOLS (academic); nurseries, kindergartens, elementary, secondary, public or private SCHOOLS (non-academic); commercial, vocational, public or private SERVICE establishments, including but not limited to barber shops, small item repair shops, rental shops, custom fabrication, tailor shops, beauty parlors SEWING operations limited to not more than five employees nor more than 2,000 square feet of floor space provided that the operation is located within a fire district SHEET metal, roofing shops STORAGE, outdoor STORAGE, petroleum products in quantities greater than 100,000 gallons STORES or shops, retail, but not automotive sales and not otherwise listed herein 3 SWIMMING pools, community, non-profit	Г	
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1	STORES or shops, retail, but not automotive sales and not otherwise listed herein	3
SWIMMING pools, private 1	SWIMMING pools, community, non-profit	1
	SWIMMING pools, private	1

TELECOMMUNICATIONS towers, free- standing structures	3
TELECOMMUNICATIONS towers, concealed or camouflaged	2
TELECOMMUNICATIONS towers, roof-top towers and towers attached to structures	N/A
TEMPORARY buildings incidental to a	
construction project	N/A
TOBACCO prizery	3
TOURIST homes	2
TRAINING facilities, police and fire	2
TRANSPORTATION terminals, passenger	3
TRANSPORTATION terminals, freight	3
TRAVEL trailer parks	3
UNIFIED Business Developments	3
VETERINARY establishments	3
WAREHOUSES	4
WAREHOUSES, sales or service	4
WASTEWATER treatment plants	5
WHOLESALE establishments	3
WOODWORKING shops	3
YARD sales	N/A
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